

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

- Sub A1
1. An imaging system comprising the following:
 firmware associated with the imaging system;
 a communications device adapted and constructed to facilitate
 communication between the imaging system and a remote source of
 information; and
 an automatic remote firmware update mechanism adapted to
 selectively and automatically retrieve firmware upgrade information from the
 remote source of information via the communications device, and to selectively
 and automatically install the firmware upgrade information into the firmware of
 the imaging system.
 2. An imaging system according to claim 1, wherein the
 automatic remote firmware update mechanism comprises a part of firmware
 installed in the imaging system.
 3. An imaging system according to claim 1, wherein the
 communications device is selected from a group consisting of a modem and a
 network interface card.
 4. An imaging system according to claim 3, wherein the
 communication device further comprises means for connecting to, and accessing
 information from, a web site.
 5. An imaging system according to claim 1, further comprising
 the following:
 flag means for storing a value corresponding to an update trigger
 parameter;

5 flag parameter update means for incrementally increasing the
6 update trigger parameter in response to a sensed condition; and
7 trigger means for actuating the automatic remote firmware update
8 mechanism to automatically retrieve firmware upgrade information when the
9 update trigger parameter reaches a predetermined update value.

1 6. An imaging system according to claim 5, wherein the flag
2 parameter update means incrementally increases the update trigger parameter
3 value in response to page count through the imaging system.

1 7. An imaging system according to claim 5, wherein the flag
2 parameter update means incrementally increases the update trigger parameter
3 value in response to the passage of a predetermined amount of time.

1 8. An imaging system according to claim 5, further comprising
2 means for periodically checking the update trigger parameter.

1 9. An imaging system according to claim 1, further comprising
2 means for comparing downloaded firmware upgrade information to existing
3 firmware to determine the necessity of installing the downloaded firmware
4 upgrade information.

1 10. An imaging system according to claim 1, further comprising
2 means for notifying a system user when firmware is to be upgraded.

1 11. In an imaging system including firmware and a
2 communications device adapted and constructed to facilitate communication
3 between the imaging device and a remote source of information, a method of
4 updating firmware comprising the following steps:

selectively and automatically retrieving firmware upgrade information from the remote source of information via the communications device; and

selectively installing the firmware upgrade information into the firmware of the imaging system.

12. A method according to claim 11, wherein the step of retrieving firmware upgrade information comprises retrieving firmware upgrade information from a web site.

13. A method according to claim 11, further comprising the following steps:

storing a value corresponding to an update trigger parameter;

sensing a condition;

incrementally increasing the update trigger parameter in response to the sensed condition; and

actuating the automatic remote firmware update mechanism to automatically retrieve firmware upgrade information when the update trigger parameter reaches a predetermined update value.

14. A method according to claim 13, wherein the step of sensing a condition comprises sensing page count through the imaging system, and the step of incrementally increasing the update trigger parameter comprises incrementally increasing the update trigger parameter value in response to page count through the imaging system.

15. A method according to claim 13, wherein the step of sensing a condition comprises sensing the passage of time, and the step of incrementally increasing the update trigger parameter comprises incrementally increasing the update trigger parameter value in response to the passage of a predetermined amount of time.

